

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

April 18, 2012

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, April 18, 2012 at 6 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island. The meeting was called to order by Mason Hawes, Chairman.

Member Present: Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Ed Sisk and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: Anne Baptista, Christian Lambiase, John Pinto and Austin Pendergast

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Bruce Long, Town Council Liaison; Dick Adams, Planning Board

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission

Town Officials: None

Others Present: None

Agenda

Roll Call: The roll was called with attendance as indicated above.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 15 committee meeting were reviewed and approved as amended.

Old Business:

- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway.** Much of the meeting centered on the need for an improved and safer pathway from Purgatory Chasm to the Surfer's End Parking Area and improved beautification of the area to open the scenic vistas.

It was noted that the recent tragic death of a bicyclist in the area did not result from the lack of a safe pathway but it certainly heightened concern for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists transiting the area. Purgatory Road is heavily trafficked with a significant number of bicyclists and pedestrians using the road, principally to get to and from Second Beach. Many pedestrians walk and all bicyclists cycle on the street side of the guardrail that separates the road from the adjacent ocean-side property. An improved pathway on the ocean side of the guardrail would provide a significantly safer area in which to walk and ride.

The committee also noted that there were very scenic, unique vistas of Second Beach, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, the Little Compton area in the distance and the Atlantic Ocean from the area. Vegetation obstructs the vistas, however, which could be opened by clearing brush and undergrowth.

The area in question is property of the State of Rhode Island. Under

these circumstances, the committee thought it appropriate that the cost of the recommended improvements be borne by the state and that Middletown Open Space and Recreation funds should not be used.

Following the discussion, the following motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved:

Action be taken to provide for an improved pathway from Purgatory Chasm to the Surfer's End Parking Area to provide for greater safety and to open, by clearing brush and undergrowth, the unique vistas.

The Middletown Open Space and Fields Committee believes that this worthy project is a responsibility of the state of Rhode Island and should not incur the use of any Middletown Open Space and Recreation funds.

The Recording Secretary was directed to notify the Town Manager of the committee's action. [Note. The notification occurred on April 20.]

- Continue Review of Results of the Parks Projects Prioritization. No discussion.**
- Park Procedures and Protocol Workshop. No discussion.**
- Community Garden on Library Grounds. Twenty-two applications**

for garden plots had been submitted. The plots will be of various sizes, the largest likely to be 4' x 12'.

- **Site Visit to West Main Recreation Complex and Community Garden.** Mason will attempt to coordinate a time and date when Theresa Coish and Nancy Corkery were available to discuss the community garden.

New Business:

- **Demery Park (Steward Assessment).** Ed Sisk, park steward for Demery Park, indicated that he had received an e-mail from Linda Finn, who had been instrumental in the design of the grounds when the park was established with regard to several maintenance issues. The e-mail was received just as the Public Works Department had completed its spring maintenance at the park. He commended the department on the manner in which the maintenance was performed.

Ed has scheduled a pickup trash day for the neighborhood children for Sunday, April 22.

Ed indicated he would prepare the report on park conditions as required by the document approved by the Town Council establishing the Park Steward Program. As provided by that document a copy will be provided to the Public Works Department and the Ocean Space & Fields Committee.

- **Identification of Parks Requiring Stewards.** Dunlap Wheeler Park and Albro Woods were discussed, however, it was decided that neither required a steward.

- **Site Visit to Other Middletown Parks.** See the discussion under Old Business concerning a visit to the West Main Recreation Complex and Community Garden.

- **Proposed Agenda Items for April 18 Meeting.**

- **Purgatory Chasm Walkway**

- **Continue Review of Results of the Parks Projects** **Prioritization**

- **Park Procedures and Protocol Workshop**

- **Community Garden on Library Grounds**

- **Demery Park (Steward Assessment)**

- **Identification of Parks Requiring Park Stewards**

- **Site Visit to West Main Recreation Complex and Town Library**

- **Properties Updates**

- **Proposed Agenda Items for April Meeting**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m. The next meeting of the committee will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station.

Ralph Thomas

Recording Secretary